(c) The Tiger, being at the apex of the pyramid of the eco-system, the extinction of tiger, if takes place, will upset the environmental equilibrium.

(d) The steps taken by the Government are given in the enclosed statement (*See* below)

(e) The populatin of Tiger, as per the estimation carried out in 1993 is 3750.

Statement

Steps Taken by the Government to Check Dangerous Trend of Poaching of Tigers

(i) Hunting of wild animals included in Schedules I to IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been banned by law.

(ii) Special measures for protection and conservation of tiger, elephants and rhinos and their habitat are being implemented.

(iii) A network of 441 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 80 National Parks covering 1,48,000 sq. km. has been set up for conservation of wild flora and fauna. The Govt. of India have also launched the "Project Tiger" and "Project Elephant" in the years 1973 and 1991 respectively to give impetus to the conservation of these wild animals. Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government under various centrally sponsored plan schemes, including the Project Tiger and Project Elephant Schemes, & for development of National Parks and Sanctuaries on request from the State Governments.

(iv) Raids are carried out by the Wildlife authorities, whenever information of illegal trading in wildlife animals reaches them.

(v) International Trade in Endangered Species of animals and articles made thereof is regulated under the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The trade in ivory is totally banned.

(vi) Regional and Sub-regional offices of Wildlife Preservation have been set up mostly at the main export centres of the country to prevent smuggling of wildlife products.

(vii) Interdepartmental coordination has been enhanced with other enforcement organisations like Police, BSF, Customs, ITBP, Coast Guards etc. Training programmes on wildlife enforcement and implementation were also conducted for all these organisations at New Delhi and Dehradun during, 1995;

(viii) A "Tiger Crisis Cell" has been set up in the Ministry to suggest improvement in the management of tiger bearing areas of the country.

(ix) The State Governments have been advised to strengthen vigilance and intensify patrolling.

(x) Steps are being initiated to set up "Special Strike Force" in the Project Tiger areas;

(xi) A Protocol has been signed with the Govt. of Peoples' Republic of China to coordinate bilateral issues concerning tiger conservation and to check smuggling and the illegal trade of tiger bones and other parts of its body; and

(xii) Steps have been initiated by the Government to establish the 'Global Tiger Forum' for strengthening international cooperation to curb poaching of tiger and to coordinate efforts for the conservation of tiger and its habitat throughout the tiger range countries.

Appointment of Committee to Study the effect of Yanni's Concert on Taj Mahal

3685. SHRI MUKESH R. PATEL:
SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:
SHRI S.M. KRISHNA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had appointed any Committee to study the effect of western musician Yanni's concert on the Taj Mahal in Agra, recently;

(b) if so, the observations of the Committee; and

(c) whether Government have accepted those recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir. In pursuance of the orders of the Supreme Court in IA 38 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1338484 dated March 17, 1997, a committee was appointed by the Government on March 18, 1997 to monitor the environmental impact of Yanni's concert on the Taj Mahal. The significant observations of the Committee were.

(i) There was no damage to the green belt plantation by the visitors. The visitors were generally kept away from the green belt plantations.

(ii) Setting up of emission sources (particularly power generator) has been prohibited in the Taj Trapezium Area. However, in the present case, diesel powered generators have been used at the concert site.

(iii) The results of noise level monitoring shows that none of the areas monitored, was showing the noise level within the range of 40 decibels specified by the Supreme Court.

(iv) The ambient air quality monitoring indicated that there was no significant change in ambient air quality due to Yanni's concert. Sulphur di-oxide and oxides of nitrogen levels were always within the prescribed standards and suspended particulate matter was higher than the prescribed limit.

(c) The report of the Committee has been submitted to the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Poaching Activities Along Delhi-Ghaziabad Border

3686. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:
SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report appearing in "The Hindustan Times" dated the 29th March, 1997 regarding poaching activities along Delhi-Ghaziabad border virtually making it a hunting ground for killing of neelgai, deer and peacocks; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government to check it?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes Sir, the report has come to our notice.

(b) As per report received from the Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttar Pradesh, no incident of poaching has come to their notice. However, it is a fact that the District Magistriate of Ghaziabad had issued some permits for killing blue bulls under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which have been damaging standing crops. Patrolling on the border has been intensified to prevent poaching of wild animals and the Police Administration is also making effective patrolling to prevent poaching.

Public Hearing on Clearance of Developmental Projects

3687. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the detailed modalities have since been finalised;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, by when will they be finalised?